

From the Upper Chamber



Senate Information Office ♦ 201 Legislative Office Building ♦ Atlanta, Georgia ♦ 404.656.0028

Report for Thursday, February 14, 2008

The eighteenth day of the 2008 legislative session was called to order by Lieutenant Governor **Casey Cagle**.

Senator **Don Balfour** of the 9th stated that the journal had been read and was found to be correct.

Senate Bills 460-468, Senate Resolution 919 and House Bills 579, 953, 1041 and 1088 were read for the first time and assigned to committees. The clerk then read the reports of standing committees and second readers.

After the morning roll call, Sen. **J.B Powell** of the 23rd led the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance. He then introduced the *Chaplain of the Day*, Pastor **Kenneth Clay** of New Creation Christian Church in Augusta, who led the Senate in the daily devotional.

Sen. **Steve Henson** of the 41st took the rostrum to introduce the *Doctor of the Day*, Dr. **Rajeev Mathavan** of Atlanta.

Majority Leader **Tommie Williams** of the 19th took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to address the recent decision by the Georgia Chamber of Commerce to oppose establishing the Cancer Treatment Centers of America in Georgia.

Sen. **John Douglas** of the 17th took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to recognize Henry County Chief of Police **Russell Abernathy**, who is currently experiencing health problems.

Sen. **Valencia Seay** of the 34th took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to recognize Doorkeeper **Don Butler**'s festive jacket for the Valentine's Day holiday.

Sen. **Regina Thomas** of the 2nd took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to ask for the continued support of the victims of the sugar factory explosion in Chatham County last week.

SR 908-918, 920 and 921 were read and adopted.

The clerk read SR 852, which congratulates the Buford High School Lady Wolves Softball Team for winning the 2007 Class AA State Championship. Sen. **Renee Unterman** of the 45th took the rostrum to speak to the resolution.

The clerk read SR 853, which commends the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College on its 100th anniversary. Sen. **Joseph Carter** of the 13th took the rostrum to speak to the resolution, and to introduce one of the college's alumni, former Lt. Governor and Speaker of the House **George T. Smith**.

The clerk read SB 359, which directs the Department of Economic Development to establish a "Made in Georgia" program to promote awareness of goods and products manufactured in Georgia.

Sen. **Tim Golden** of the 8th took the well to present the bill.

SB 359 passed by a vote of 42 to 0.

SB 372 was read, which seeks to encourage ethical practices in government by establishing ethics panels within local governments.

Sen. **Kasim Reed** of the 35th took the well to explain the background and purpose of the bill. He yielded to questions from Sen. **Ed Harbison** of the 15th.

President Pro Tempore **Eric Johnson** of the 1st took the well to explain his Amendment 1, which sets forth a process to allow for per diems to be collected internally within the legislature.

Amendment 1 was unanimously adopted.

The Committee Substitute to SB 372 was adopted as amended unanimously.

SB 372 passed by substitute by a vote of 46 to 0.

The clerk read SB 399, which reauthorizes the solid waste trust fund by requiring tire dealers to impose a \$1 fee on each new replacement tire sold in the state.

Sen. **Ross Tolleson** of the 20th took the well to present the bill.

Lt. Gov. **Cagle** recognized members of the Georgia Brain Train Group, a University of Georgia student organization, visiting the Capitol today.

SB 399 passed by a vote of 43 to 0.

SB 405 was read, which updates the *Uniform Anatomical Gift Act* by creating an “opt-in” system for individual organ donors, or for those who are authorized to make an anatomical donation on behalf of a decedent.

Sen. **Balfour** took the well to present the bill. He mentioned his support of the proposed amendments.

Sen. **Preston Smith** of the 52nd took the well to first recognize members of the Leadership Rome Program, seated in the Senate gallery. He then spoke to Amendments 1 and 2, the first of which adds language to allow for a durable power of attorney for healthcare. Amendment 2 strikes unnecessary language from the bill.

Sen. **John Wiles** of the 37th took the well to address his concerns with the bill.

Amendment 1 was unanimously adopted.

Amendment 2 was unanimously adopted.

The Committee Substitute to SB 405 was adopted unanimously as amended.

Sen. **Don Thomas** of the 54th took the rostrum to recognize the members of the Leadership Dalton-Whitfield program, seated in the Senate gallery.

SB 405 passed by substitute by a vote of 47 to 0.

The clerk read SB 417, which requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to develop and publish benchmarks and issue reports on the progress of construction projects.

Sen. **Jeff Mullis** of the 53rd took the well to explain the bill.

SB 417 passed by a vote of 49 to 0.

The clerk read SB 420, which will change provisions of the *Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Act* to exempt the DOT from civil penalties levied for certain violations.

Sen. **Chip Pearson** of the 51st took the well to present the bill and yielded to questions from Senators **Seth Harp** of the 29th, **Henson**, **Mullis** and **Unterman**.

Sen. **Michael Meyer von Bremen** of the 12th took the well to speak against the bill, and yielded to questions from Sen. **David Adelman** of the 42nd.

Sen. **Pearson** asked unanimous consent to table SB 420. There was no objection.

SR 819 was read, which creates the Senate Comprehensive Firearms Law Study Committee to examine Georgia’s current firearms laws.

Sen. **Mitch Seabaugh** of the 28th took the well to present the bill.

Sen. **Lee Hawkins** of the 49th took the rostrum to recognize members of the Hall County Chamber of Commerce and members of Leadership Hall, seated in the Senate gallery.

SR 819 was adopted by a vote of 49 to 0.

SR 859 was read, which proposes an amendment to the Constitution to repeal the levy of the state's share of the ad valorem tax on homes and vehicles except in the case of an emergency.

Sen. **Chip Rogers** of the 21st took the well to present the bill and Amendment 1, which clarifies that the legislation does not interfere with the existing uniformity clause.

Amendment 1 was unanimously adopted.

SR 859 was adopted as amended by a vote of 49 to 4.

Following the morning announcements, Sen. **Williams** moved that the Senate stand adjourned until 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, February 19.

#